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PRISON INDUSTRIES.

BY

EDWARD GRUBB, M.A.,

Secretary of the Howard Association,



ISSUED BY THE HOWARD ASSOCIATION, LONDON,

February, 1903.

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WHAT are the real objects sought to be attained by Prison Labour? Does such labour compete injuriously with that of workmen and employers outside? What are the best methods of organising it in such a way as to accomplish its true purposes, while avoiding possible evils?

These are questions to which "the man in the street" is often ready with dogmatic answers, but whose difficulty grows the more they are practically studied. The Departmental Committee on Prisons in 1895 reported that:

After searching enquiry and personal investigation during the past year, we are impressed with the extreme complexity of this particular subject (Prison Labour), upon which no one can be qualified to speak with weight who has not given systematic and prolonged attention to it.

There appears to be room for careful enquiry into such questions as those just indicated.

I.—THE OBJECTS OF PRISON LABOUR.

(a) The first thought associated with prison labour is that of Punishment. "Eighteen months' imprisonment *with hard labour*" implies that something disagreeable is

being added to the imprisonment to make it more retributive and deterrent.* From this point of view, irksomeness and monotony are the chief *desiderata*, and must be secured, if necessary, even by setting tasks that are useless to society. Useful work, it is thought, might easily become interesting, and therefore lose its penal quality. In the treadmill and the crank we see purely penal labour; only slightly removed from this are oakum-picking and stone-breaking. Probably the object sought is in fair measure attained; but at a very serious cost. Broadly speaking, the result of aiming *only* at retribution and deterrence is not merely waste of labour power, but (which is much worse) waste of character; for penal labour has almost always a hardening effect on the individual subjected to it. "It neither prepares the prisoner for a life of honest industry on his own part, nor eradicates motives to corrupt others; neither is it at all likely that its deterrent effect, whatever that may be, is at all commensurate with the evils it engenders—the resentment, obstinacy, selfishness and hardness which it unquestionably tends to produce."† In addition, it tends to disgust a prisoner with work, so that its costliness is not only temporary but permanent: the prisoner

* Discussing, at the International Penitentiary Congress held in London, July 3rd to 13th, 1872, the question *Should Prison Labour be merely penal, or should it be industrial?* the former Governor of Stafford Prison urged that "prisons were not reformatories, but should be a terror to criminals." (Transactions of International Penitentiary Congress, 1872, p. 427.)

† Transactions of International Penitentiary Congress, 1872; paper by Mr. Frederic Hill, p. 645.

produces nothing to repay his cost, and is likely to remain a burden on society. The retention of such labour can only be defended if it is made part of a "short and sharp" period of punishment, to be followed by more remedial treatment.* It is satisfactory to note that the use of the treadmill is now abandoned in English prisons.

(b) In reaction against the wastefulness of merely penal labour, the theory emerges that the real object is Maintenance—that prisoners ought to be made, by their exertions, to maintain themselves, and to repay, if possible, their cost to society. In the paper just quoted the writer urged that prisons could, with positive advantage to their inmates, be made self-supporting. He quoted, in support of his contention, the experience of the American States, where the distinction between "hard labour" and "industrial labour" even then scarcely existed. Since that time the chief attention of the managers of many of the American State prisons has been given to making them self-supporting, and in this they have to a large extent succeeded.†

The methods adopted to secure this result are various. In some cases the convicts are leased out to

* See Tallack, *Penological and Preventive Principles*, p. 174 & ff.

† Thus the total cost of the State prison at Columbus, Ohio, with 2,174 inmates, was in 1897, \$288,807, of which no less than \$230,947 was recouped from the prisoners' earnings, leaving a net cost per head of only 26½ dollars, or about £5. 11s. 5d. (Report to the Home Office on Treatment of Crime in America, by Sir E. J. Ruggles-Brise, C.B., 1899, p. 15.) The net cost per prisoner in English local prisons was, in 1900, £22. 18s. 7d.; in convict prisons £26. 10s. 5d. (Report of Commissioners of Prisons, 1901, p. 99.)

private persons, who feed and clothe them and make what they can from their labour. The shocking abuses to which this system, which is little else than slavery pure and simple, has given rise in some of the Southern States, have been repeatedly pointed out by the Howard Association.* In other cases the labour of prisoners is let out by the day to private firms, who supply the capital and organisation, clothing and food being provided by the State. Other prisons, again, are "run" by the authorities as factories, the latest scientific appliances being used, and the produce sold in the open market. The opposition of trade unions and private employers, who complain of unfair competition, has brought the system to an end in the State of New York, though it is apparently cheap to the tax-payer.

The fundamental defects of all these methods is that by fixing attention on merely pecuniary considerations, and forgetting the personality of the prisoner himself, the State secures a gain which is but temporary, and largely illusory, for the prisoner, working under imperfect discipline, and in unchecked association with other criminals, is rarely reformed, and on his discharge he probably falls back into evil ways, remaining an expense to society.†

* *The Coloured Race in America* (1899), and *Continuing Cruelties in Convict Chain Gangs and Camps* (1901), pamphlets issued by the Howard Association. Also Reports of the Association, 1898, 1899, 1900.

† "It often occurs that through the pursuit of delusive ideas of

(c) Hence, it is urged, the true object that should be sought by prison labour is to equip the prisoner in such a way that on his discharge he shall be able to support himself by honest industry. The aim of the prison authorities should be to teach him a trade.*

The theory is attractive until you come to try it. Experience soon shows that the conditions of labour in a prison are so different from those outside that training in special trades can rarely be given effectively. Under our present system of short sentences, the time available is usually insufficient; the expense of engaging really

'economy' in regard to prison labour great waste and loss are incurred. It has been repeatedly forgotten in practice that the most truly economical form of criminal treatment is that which eventually reduces the number of offenders to a minimum. It is this final result, this ultimate proportion of crime, which constitutes at once the test and the real guide as to the best selection of criminal labour." W. Tallack, *Penological and Preventive Principles* (1896), p. 260.

* "It is important that the vocation in which each prisoner is employed shall be of such a nature as to fit him to be self-supporting upon his discharge. The majority of those who commit crime have no trade. They are common labourers, shovel-and-pick men; have never been taught habits of industry; and have fallen into crime either because they could not obtain employment or were unwilling to work. . . Reformation in men of this character, who are not criminals by instinct but by pressure of want, can be effected largely by teaching them habits of industry and supplying them in some measure with mechanical skill. When a prisoner is liberated he should have some practical knowledge and ability to earn a livelihood. It is cheaper for the State, and better for society, to have trained him in such a way than it is to allow him to relapse into crime."—*Prison Systems of the United States*: Introduction, by S. J. Barrows. Reports prepared for the International Prison Commission, 1900, p. 23.

"According to the American census of 1890, of 52,894 convicts 31,426 were ignorant of any kind of trade, and of the latter 23,144 were native-born Americans."—*The Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes*, by C. R. Henderson, D.D., p. 243.

skilled instructors for so many individual learners is felt to be prohibitive; the primitive hand-methods that are usually the only ones possible in English prisons, where cellular imprisonment is the rule (at least during the early weeks or months of prison life), do not train for the elaborate machine industry that prevails outside;* and, even if these difficulties are overcome, there is too often in prospect the crushing question from an employer whom the ex-prisoner may ask for a job, "Where did you learn your trade?" It is probably safe to say that not one in ten of those who come into prison as unskilled labourers can be sent out able to maintain themselves, even if willing and anxious to do so, by skilled labour.

(d) But, it is urged finally, the object of prison labour is not so much to impart skill in special trades as to discipline the mind and body; to form, or reform, the prisoner's character, by training him in attention and exactness, by developing his faculties, and strengthening his self-control and self-reliance.† The fundamental requisite is not skill but *character*: if only this can be

* I recently watched a prisoner at work in his cell, making a pair of prison boots; and I fully understood the remark of the prison warden: "You see, Sir, our sort of boot-making isn't much use outside."

† "The manual training school . . . lays a broad foundation for later developments of skill in special directions; it awakens the dullard to increased quickness of mental activity; it helps the mathematically deficient to master form, number, proportion; and it enables the passionate and ungovernable to restrain and direct their impulses of temper and appetite."—*The Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent Classes*, p. 287.

developed, and means taken to place the ex-prisoner in suitable surroundings on his discharge, he is likely to become a decent and self-supporting citizen.

This is the thought that, along with whatever extravagances, appears to have been at the root of the modern developments of prison method at Elmira, Concord, and other centres of experiment in the United States. These we shall consider at a later stage. It is enough at this point to suggest that of the four objects aimed at in prison labour, viz.:—(1) Punishment; (2) Maintenance; (3) Technical Instruction; (4) Reformation of character, the last would seem to be most in accordance with the dictates of civilised and Christian sentiment; and that, just so far as it is successful, it will prove cheap and beneficial to society.

II.—THE QUESTION OF COMPETITION.

One of the advantages claimed for the method of training, as opposed to that of directly remunerative labour, is that there is in this way less competition with "free" industry outside the prisons. The reality and extent of this competition has been much debated. Employers and workmen are prone to complain of it in their own trades; their opposition has almost abolished mat-making in English prisons, and, as already noted, in the State of New York has stopped the sale of prison-made goods. The Report of the American Industrial Commission on Prison Labour, prepared in conformity with an Act of Congress of

1898, records the conclusion (which, indeed, is obvious) that "the employment of prisoners in productive labour does result in competition of some character with free labour and industry"; and it assumes (but without any proof) that this competition is an evil. Several of the recommendations of the Report are based on the idea that it must be as far as possible avoided.*

• Before discussing the merits of this well-worn controversy, it will be well to glance at the practice of some of the other nations in regard to it. In the Appendix to the Minutes of Evidence taken by the English Prisons Committee in 1895, it is shown that in most of the European countries the endeavour is made to avoid such competition with outside labour as is likely to give rise to serious complaint. In England the work of mat-making in prisons was almost entirely abolished, in consequence of representations made by those engaged in the industry, some years after the local prisons were placed under the Prison Commissioners in 1877.† The general policy pursued in English

* I am informed by Mr. Samuel J. Barrows, Prison Commissioner of the United States, that this conclusion of the Report is not accepted by him, nor by most of the American prison administrators. Two of the nineteen members of the Industrial Commission protested against that portion of the Report which recommends the interdiction of the sale of prison-made goods. At the time the Report was issued (1900) New York was the only State in the Union that prohibited such sale; the produce of prison industry being, in that State, taken "for the use of public institutions only."—(*Report of Industrial Commission*, p. 79.)

† Mr. James Duncan, Store Accountant to the Prisons Department of the Home Office, reported to the Committee that 2,800 prisoners

prisons is to sell as little as possible of prison produce in the outside market, and to restrict the labour of prisoners, in the main, to articles used in the prisons themselves and in different Government departments.* In this case their value, at what are supposed to be market prices, is reckoned to the prison where they are made. In a few cases work is done by contract with outside firms, as in rug-making, wood-chopping, and laundry work; but this appears to be the exception.

Work on the land is not much in use in English local prisons. Some have land within their enclosure, on which selected prisoners are engaged in growing vegetables and other produce; but many prisons have little or no available land attached.† In the convict prisons, work on the land is largely practised; nearly one thousand acres of Dartmoor are in course of reclamation by convict labour. Some of the farm produce is sold, the rest transferred to prison use.

In France the Government, since 1882, has endeavoured to give "a legitimate satisfaction to the

were employed in mat-making at the time the prisons were taken over, but only some seventy in 1895. The change was made about 1890.—(Minutes of Evidence, Q. 4351, 11811.)

* Details of the kinds of work done in English prisons may be found in any of the Annual Reports of the Prison Commissioners. Oakum-picking is still largely used for short-time men. Mail-bags, hammocks and prison garments are made; and the weaving of coarse cloth is carried on at Leeds, Wakefield, Liverpool, and a few other prisons.

† Out of 63 local and convict prisons, in 1895, 38 had either no land, or less than one acre available for cultivation. (Minutes of Evidence, Appendix IV., p. 556.)

interests concerned" in the sale of prison produce, by consulting Chambers of Commerce and other similar bodies in the district in which a prison is situated. Their opinions are communicated to the Minister of the Interior, who fixes the various tariffs (wages, prices, and so on) in such a way that free labour shall not suffer.

In Germany, Austria, and Hungary competition is reduced to a minimum. Most of the produce is taken for Government use; but in Austria large quantities of prison-made baskets are *exported* from the country, with the idea of avoiding home competition.

In other countries it is reported that complaints of competition are often raised by interested parties, but that they had little weight. The separate cellular system, which largely prevails, and which necessitates hand-labour, makes the production of prison goods (if wages are reckoned at the current rate) more costly than that of similar articles outside. In some cases special industries, not pursued outside, have been introduced; and usually the endeavour is made to practise such a variety of occupations that the produce of any one shall bear an insignificant ratio to that of free labour in the same department. In Switzerland there is little if any restriction on the sale of prison-made goods, but "efforts are made to push them, not by their cheapness, but by their fine and durable workmanship." This is in accordance with the policy of the country, which is to make its prisons schools of industry.* In Belgium a large

* Minutes of Evidence, Committee of 1895, pp. 495-501.

part of the work done is for Government departments ; but in default of such demand, the labour-power of prisoners is let out to certain contractors, at fixed rates of wages, carefully calculated so as not to underbid free workmen.*

The question of the reality and hurtfulness of competition between prison labour and that of outside workers, when carefully examined, narrows itself into a small compass. Everyone will agree that if, in the existing conditions of demand, a limited number of persons can find employment at a certain trade, it is not just to give the work to prisoners, at the cost of taking the means of subsistence from free labourers who are compelled to pay taxes for the maintenance of those prisoners. It is, no doubt, largely because there is truth in this theory, that Government and Prison administrators are sensitive to agitation on the subject, and, as we have seen, frequently take trouble to meet the objections raised. At the same time, there can be little doubt that the danger of hurtful competition has been much exaggerated, and that with careful administration it can be reduced to such dimensions as hardly to be felt at all. Those who advocate entire freedom from restriction point out that the whole produce of prison labour, the value of which, in this country, is reckoned at some £120,000 annually,† bears but an infinitesimal

* From a letter to the writer from M. de Latour, General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Belgium.

† Report of Prisons Committee, 1895, p. 21.

ratio to that of free industry. But this in itself is not convincing. For it might well happen that a considerable proportion of prison labour might be employed in some one particular industry, and that by this competition that industry outside might be crippled or destroyed.

This is what led to the discontinuance of mat-making in English prisons. The industry is one peculiarly suitable for prison life: "it can be learnt in a few days, even by unskilled men: it is specially adapted for cellular work, and for the weak-minded and epileptic class of prisoners." It was really under the stress of foreign competition, chiefly from India, Germany and Belgium, that the attack on it arose: and probably the Prison Commissioners have gone further than is wise or reasonable in abolishing it.*

The root of much of the working-class fear of prison industry is doubtless to be found in that wide-reaching delusion which Mr. Schloss (in his *Methods of Industrial Remuneration*) has well called "The Fallacy of the Lump of Labour." It is a fixed idea with many of the less thoughtful workpeople that there is a definite amount of work to be done, so that the more one man does the less there is left for another to do. This is the basis of the practice of slow working, so far as it prevails among workmen. They think that by taking care not to do

* Sir E. du Cane showed, in a Memorandum to the Prisons Committee of 1895, that the industry had, previously to 1878, grown up and increased in England, in spite of prison competition.

too much they are conferring a real benefit on their mates. In the mind of many a well-intentioned man there is a real and pathetic conflict between duty to his workmates and duty to his employers. To those who hold this view it seems that all work done in prisons is so much taken from more deserving persons outside.

It is needless here to spend time in disproving this time-honoured fallacy, further than to point out that the demand for work is not a constant quantity, but depends on the demand for goods, and this again on the income of the people. If more work is done, some one is better off for it, and the demand for goods is increased. The new demand created by higher productivity may not, and probably will not, be a demand for the particular goods so produced; but it is there; and, if only the supply of labour can follow it, society will be the gainer and no one will be the loser. The difficulty is, of course, that in real life labour is far less mobile and adaptable than economic theory was once in the habit of assuming it to be.

Two representatives of the trade unions, Mr. J. J. Rudge, and Mr. J. H. Walker, of the Flint Glass Makers' Union, when examined by the Prisons Committee, showed that they, in common, I am sure, with very many trade union leaders, were not victims of the fallacy in question. They admitted that it was morally necessary for prisoners to be employed, and raised no objection, either to the produce of their labour being used by the Government, or even to its being put on the

market, provided that it was not sold for less than the trade price.*

The question, then, is mainly one of Administration. If the industries in prisons are sufficiently varied, and the trade price is not "cut," there is, as a rule, but little danger from the sale of prison goods. To avoid possible risks, it is probably well that prison Governors should keep in touch with Chambers of Commerce, Trade Councils, and the like.

The risk is greatest in times of commercial depression, when the market is already overstocked with goods that are unsaleable at remunerative prices. Under such conditions, even a small addition to the quantity of these goods may do serious injury.

Everyone who has had experience in the attempt, at such times, to "find work for the unemployed," knows how great the difficulty is. Without attempting now to analyse the phenomena, or seek for the causes, of trade depressions, it is clear that they manifest a misadaptation of supply to demand: the goods placed on the market are produced in expectation of a demand which does not "come off." Now it is evident that mistakes in adapting supply to demand are more likely to be made by prison Governors, who have no personal or pecuniary interest in the process, than by outside persons whose living depends upon it. Hence, sales in the market should be watched with care, and restricted when signs of commercial depression are seen in the industries affected.

* Minutes of Evidence, pp. 375-378.

It is often urged that the supply of articles for Government use is open to the charge of competition equally with their sale in the market; on the ground that, if prisoners did not produce these goods, other persons would be required to do it. But this objection overlooks the force of what was urged in the last paragraph. The supply of articles for use in Government departments has nothing speculative about it. It is production to meet a known demand: "production for use," and not "production for profit." Hence, the risks of misadaptation and over-supply do not come in; the industry is stable, and not liable to be upset by unexpected changes in the market. This is the great reason why the endeavour should be made, so far as possible, to direct prison labour to the supply of the needs of public institutions.

III.—WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

It has been urged in this paper:—

(a) That labour imposed as a *mere* punishment for crime is not effective, since in nearly all cases it hardens and does not reform.

(b) That the attempt to make prisoners support themselves by their own labour is usually a short-sighted economy, since it is almost impossible to make a profit out of the work of prisoners and at the same time to bring remedial influences to bear upon them.

(c) That the teaching of particular skilled trades to prisoners, in order that they may support themselves by

industry on their discharge, can rarely be effectively accomplished.

(d) That therefore the chief object at which to aim is reformation and discipline of character, and the development of mental and physical powers. Even if, at the time, this is an expensive process, it is likely in the long run to be the cheapest, and it is certainly in accord with the highest ideal of the duty a civilised community owes to its weaker and erring members.

The change from the popular view of the objects of prison discipline, to that which is held by those who appreciate the foregoing considerations, can hardly be more tersely expressed than in the words of a shrewd Scotch detective of thirty years ago :

The simple truth is that punishment hardens ; it is forgotten by the prison people that they have clay, not gold, to work upon ; and so, whilst passing their material through the fire, they are making bricks, not crowns of righteousness.*

In these words is raised the whole theory of Penology, the discussion of which would take us far beyond the limits of the present article. Some reformers, on both sides of the Atlantic, have not hesitated to declare their conviction that our whole system of punishment is a failure, and that reformation, not deterrence, is the only object at which society ought to aim. It seems unlikely that English opinion will be converted to so extreme a view ; but we may draw attention, before concluding, to

* Quoted in *The Reformatory System in the United States*: Reports prepared for the International Prison Commission, 1900, p. 37.

the nature of the experiments which the American reformers have made towards the realisation of this ideal.

The State Reformatory at Elmira, New York State, was established, under the superintendence of Mr. Z. R. Brockway, in 1876. Only first offenders, between the ages of fifteen and thirty, can, by the State law, be ordered there; and these are sent under a more or less "indeterminate sentence," to be discharged on license, or parole, when the authorities of the reformatory consider they are "cured." The minimum time of detention is twelve months: the average time before parole is earned is about 22 months.

The methods of reform adopted are, speaking briefly, physical development, by bathing, gymnastics, and military drill; manual training, from elementary "Sloyd" up to elaborate carving; industrial training in some thirty ordinary trades; and intellectual education. The life is not made easy; but the discipline, though severe, is constantly varied. The "inmates" of the reformatory are not spoken of as prisoners. They are separated at night, but work together during the day. In 1899 there were about 1,300 inmates, their total cost being some £42,000, towards which £6,000 was recouped by labour earnings. A weekly newspaper, *The Summary*, is printed on the spot, and circulates among the inmates.

As regards the result of the system, it is claimed that about 80 per cent. of the young men sent there are really reformed;* and this figure was confirmed by a special

* "From 1895 to 1897, 1,172 prisoners have been paroled. Out of that number there have been 198 revocations; 108 have returned to

enquiry made about the year 1890. A similar institution for men has been established by the State of Massachusetts at Concord, and one for women at Sherborne. In this country it would scarcely be possible to follow the example of Elmira without the law of the "indeterminate sentence," which our authorities do not favour, and which it would not be easy to pass; but some progress in this direction is being made. Two English Parliamentary Committees—those on prisons and on reformatories, which reported in 1895 and 1896 respectively—recommended a treatment for "Juvenile-adult" offenders, between the ages of 16 and 21, which should be of a reformatory rather than of a merely penal character. These recommendations have been so far adopted by our Prison Commissioners that a special system of remedial treatment for such offenders was for some time in operation at Bedford Prison. This was considered to have been successful, and a further step has now been taken. A portion of the convict prison at Borstal, in Kent, has been reconstructed for the reception of such cases, chiefly from the Metropolitan area, and for dealing with them somewhat on the lines suggested by American experience.*

prison : 90 have avoided arrest." (Sir E. J. Ruggles-Brise, Report on the Treatment of Crime in America. 1899.)

* On the occasion of a recent visit to Borstal, the author found the Governor, Mr. Western, much encouraged with the success that seems likely to attend his efforts to reform these lads. Seventy-seven were then under his care, and were being trained to various industries—as blacksmiths and tinsmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, and gardeners. They are also put to physical drill and choir practice, as well as

One department of prison labour to which, probably, more attention might well be directed, is that of work on the land. The Committee of 1895 state in their Report * :—

We regret very much that there is not more opportunity for work in gardens and on the land. It is agreed by all medical experts and prison officials that no kind of employment is more useful. It is healthy, productive, varied, and of a more or less interesting character. Plain hard digging may under suitable conditions be found a valuable and wholesome substitute for hard labour, while the lighter forms of field and garden work would be adapted for other cases.

The Committee go on to recommend that what land there is within the prison bounds should be more freely

regular school teaching. Much care has been taken in the selection and training of the warders in charge, who are also instructors. The boys are on excellent terms with the Governor, who is keenly interested in them. Nearly all of them looked bright and healthy and interested in their work ; their appearance being as different as possible from that of the ordinary convict. Strong inducements to good behaviour are offered, in the shape of better dress and more comforts in their "rooms" (not "cells") after a certain number of marks has been earned. Mr. Western considers the fact that each lad sleeps in a separate room is a vast improvement on the ordinary "reformatory" system. It is too early yet, he says, to judge of the number likely to be permanently reformed, but rapid progress has been made by many of the boys, considering that the system has only been at work about four months. His chief complaint is that the sentences do not afford time for a thorough training ; and he favours an approach to the "indeterminate" sentence, by which such lads should be sentenced for five or seven years, and discharged when considered fit for freedom. It is to be hoped that the success of this experiment may lead to the extension over the country of a similar reformatory system.

Since the above was in type, the Governor of Dartmoor Convict Prison, Basil H. Thomson, Esq., informs the writer that a similar class for "Juvenile Adults" has been opened at Dartmoor, with encouraging results.

* Page 23.

used for gardening and agricultural purposes: and that, in country districts especially, where there is often a difficulty in obtaining orders for manufacturing work, land should be acquired for agricultural labour if at present the area is insufficient. In the case of cities this may be difficult or impossible without transplanting the prison beyond the city boundaries: but in all cases it is probably desirable that efforts should be made to introduce as much as possible of such healthy outdoor occupation. It is good both for the mind and the body, and is unlikely to cause trouble through competition.

Another improvement, which the Howard Association has long advocated, is the introduction of "Sloyd," or graduated instruction in the use of tools. Without assuming that all prisoners could profit by such teaching, there is no doubt that it is applicable to many, especially of the younger men. It is good as a means of discipline for body, and mind, and character; it makes the prisoner more fit to earn an honest living on his discharge; and it does not compete with outside labour. The chief difficulty is the expense of employing skilled instructors; but this is just one of the points at which it is cheap in the long run to spend money freely and wisely. Something is being already done towards the special instruction of prison warders: and provision might well be made by which a selected number should receive longer training, including instruction in "Sloyd."

Venturing for one moment, in conclusion, into the broad field of general prison treatment, we may observe that

our present system, however excellent in its mechanism and unbroken order, will not fulfil its ultimate object—the reformation of character, except by special and patient dealing with individuals. “The main fault of our prison system is,” say the Committee of 1895,” that it treats prisoners too much as irreclaimable criminals, instead of as reclaimable men and women.” The problem of the future is not one of system only. It involves the question how to obtain officials and others who can bring the right influences to bear; how to give them time and opportunity for such close association with individual prisoners that personal character can make itself felt. Such influences cannot, indeed, be bought with money; it needs a strong sense of duty, as well as “the enthusiasm of humanity,” on the part of those who undertake the work, but as regards officials, one of the conditions of securing the right sort of men and women is to offer sufficient attraction. Public opinion needs to be aroused to the fact that the cheapest way to get rid of criminals is to spare neither trouble nor expense in cutting off the sources of supply.



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